

## Consistent Behavior - Negotiation is a Constant and Ongoing Activity



*Develop a negotiation mindset from Day 1!*

In analyzing thousands of sales calls and client interactions, it's been interesting to notice the shift in sales rep behavior when they transition from *selling* to *negotiating*.

While selling, most reps are typically very accommodating, saying "yes" to most customer's requests in order to help build rapport, and prove their desire to work with them.

Many feel that if they push back during this time, they will lose momentum or give the perception they are not easy to work with. And the last thing they want to do is something that minimizes their chances of getting the deal, or giving their competition a leg up in the process.

Surprisingly, when the negotiation process begins, their behavior changes dramatically from being *accommodating* to pushing back and saying "no".

They try to become *tough negotiators* to prove to themselves and their managers they can get the most out of the deal. However, don't realize that this shift in behavior can have a very negative effect.

I have a simple scenario that demonstrates this well, and if you have kids you'll have an even greater appreciation for it.

Just think about your kids and how they react to situations. What would happen if every night after dinner you gave them ice cream regardless of whether or not they finished their meal, and then one night told them they couldn't have ice cream? How do you think they'd react? Unfortunately, I've seen many customers have similar tantrums after their sales rep flips on their negotiation hat, and starts saying "no".

Please note that I am not suggesting caving into all your customers requests, and giving away the store. Saying no is an integral part of any business transaction, because you can't afford to give your customers everything they ask for.

However, you can minimize the impact of those "no's", by having *Consistent Behavior* throughout the customer's buying cycle.

*Why is Consistent Behavior so important?*

Consistent behavior sets expectations, and lets the customer know what to expect from you during the course of their buying cycle.

This might be in the form of always asking for something in return to their requests, or bringing forward future issues for discussion early in their buying process.

For example, if your customer asks for information, samples, or action by your company, instead of just giving it to them, it's OK to ask for something fair and reasonable in return.

Maybe you want information on their organization, access to someone who is part of the decision team, or a commitment that they will quickly evaluate the sample you are going to send them.

By requesting something in return that benefits you, and is easy for the customer to provide, you set the stage for Gives & Gets and Trade-Offs that will be used during the final negotiation.

Then when this is repeated during the final stages of the deal, your behavior will be consistent, expected, and will help facilitate a smoother negotiation process.

### *Consistent behavior builds trust!*

Changes in your behavior will make the customer feel like you have violated that trust, and leave them reeling and wondering, “why have they changed?” This can create tension resulting in less flexible, less accommodating behavior by the customer.

Once that happens and the customer responds in kind, the dynamics of the negotiation can transition from *friendly* to *adversarial* in a blink.

If your customer behaves poorly, don't retaliate. *Be consistent*. Check your ego at the door, it's business not personal.

At the end of the day, if you close a deal profitably does it matter whether or not the person who placed the order was a jerk during the process? You'll have the order, but how you handled the situation will be what everyone remembers.

### *Consistent behavior helps you develop a negotiation mindset from Day 1!*

We all know our customers will ask for discounts, improved terms... before they sign on the dotted line. If you understand and can predict these, you can incorporate them where possible into your early sales conversations.

These can be used to build on the Gives & Gets, and Trade-Offs mentioned above.

They also ensure there are no *surprises* at the end, which will keep your relationship and trust at the high levels you've developed.

One of my mantras for sales teams is “*when you're done selling, you've shouldn't have to negotiate*”. Well maybe a little, but by developing a *negotiation mindset from day 1*, and making *negotiation a constant on ongoing activity*, negotiating the final deal should be the easiest part of the process.

*Consistent Behavior* is one of the [13 Key Concepts for Successful Sales Negotiations](#). If you'd like to learn more about this topic click on the link above, or visit the Selling Resources page on our website [www.tritonconsult.com](http://www.tritonconsult.com)

*Today's buyers continue to evolve, and the approach to selling needs to adapt to those changes. The papers and content I write are based on the in-depth analysis of over 25,000 sales calls and client interactions, and were written to help sales teams develop and hone their skills.*

*Sales - it's in your DNA! Find it, develop it, and unleash your potential!*